

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### National Laser

#### Utah Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Team Participation Leads To Lean Successes At National Laser Company

##### Client Profile:

National Laser Company, one of the leading manufacturers of visible wavelength lasers, is located in South Salt Lake, Utah and has 30 employees. In addition to lasers, the company also produces replacement tubes, refurbished heads, and power supplies for existing equipment. National Laser Company counts some of the largest and most prominent users of ion lasers among its customers.

##### Situation:

National Laser Company (NLC)'s director of operations wanted to make more of an impact in the production arena. She believed the company would benefit by joining a community of manufacturers with which it could glean new ideas. During her search for high-caliber manufacturing organizations, she came across the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Utah (MEP Utah), a NIST MEP network affiliate, and called to inquire about its services.

##### Solution:

MEP Utah told her about its lean manufacturing workshops and seminars, and NLC attended one of the organization's public lean manufacturing sessions. When NLC learned about the benefits of lean manufacturing, it invited MEP Utah to help implement a series of lean transformations in the production area. MEP Utah joined NLC at its facility to implement a three-week lean transformation project. NLC's biggest obstacle to efficiency and productivity was a lack of workplace organization. MEP Utah led the company through a 5S (Sort, Shine, Set in Order, Standardize, and Sustain) project. NLC removed materials that were not used on a daily basis from the shop floor and placed them in storage. The company added visual controls and kanbans, such as departmental signs, to its production lines. Team members took responsibility for making improvements to their own areas according to their needs. In addition, NLC recruited several team members and began the job of implementing "sort" in the attic and scrap storage areas. The scrap materials that they were able to discard were then either sold to a recycling firm or auctioned off on Ebay. By simply establishing a standardized method of organizing the workplace, NLC reclaimed 60 percent of its shop floor space, increased production times by 25 percent, and used the money earned from the sale of its scrap materials to throw a well-earned, morale-boosting holiday party for its employees.

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**Results:**

Opened up 60 percent of the shop's floor space.

Increased production times by 25 percent.

Created a cleaner, more organized, and safer workplace environment.

Boosted employee morale.

**Testimonial:**

"Not only does the Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Utah's program provide a good basic hands-on program to streamline manufacturing, but it allows the opportunity to resolve the roadblocks that hold back production processes. I recommend it for any company that desires to be better than they were last year."

Debra Hampton, Director of Operations